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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 219426

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, TH
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, NOVEMBER 1, FROM BANGKOK
RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17046

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, TH
SUBJECT: HELICOPTERS FOR TNPD NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT

REF: (A) BANGKOK 13687; (B) STATE 190144; (C) BANGKOK 15842

1. THE STUDY DISCUSSED IN REFS A AND C HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED.
THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE CONCUSIONS REACHED:

A. THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT (TNPD) IS PRESENTLY MAKING
FULL USE OF ITS EXISTING 17 UH-1H AIR ASSETS. THE APPARENT LOW
UTILIZATION RATE OF THE THAI POLICE AVAIATION DIVISION (TPAD)
OVERALL HELICOPTER ASSETS RESULTS FROM LOW UTILIZATION OF CERTAIN
SPECIALTY HELICOPTERS IN THEIR INVENTORY.

B. THE TPAD CAN UTILIZE ADDITIONAL UTILITY HELICOPTERS AS MAY
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BE MADE AVAILABLE.

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C. THE NATIONWIDE DEMAND FOR POLICE UTILITY HELICOPTER ACTIVITY INCLUDES ANTI-NARCOTICS, COUNTERINSURGENCY, AERO-MEDICAL EVACUATION, RECONNAISSANCE AND INTELLIGENCE AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER PRIORITIES. THE STUDY CONCLUDES THAT THESE REQUIREMENTS CANNOT BE MET WITH THE EXISTING FLEET OF UTILITY AIRCRAFT IF RTG IS TO GIVE EVEN HIGHER PRIORITY TO ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES.

D. SUFFICIENT PILOTS, MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY AND OPERATING BUDGET PRESENTLY EXIST TO ABSORB FIVE ADDITIONAL UTILITY HELICOPTERS. (IN EFFECT, THE TNPD HAS OVERBUDGETED THE TPAD.)

E. THE STUDY CONCLUDES THAT IF FIVE ADDITIONAL UTILITY HELICOPTERS WERE MADE AVAILABLE, IN ADDITION TO THE TWO ALREADY ON ORDER, THEY WOULD IMMEDIATELY BE USED FOR PURPOSE INTENDED, E.E., MAKING POSSIBLE MORE PERSISTENT ACTIVITY AGAINST NARCOTICS SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING.

2. STUDY STATES THAT FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERDICTION OF CARAVANS, OR OPERATIONS AGAINST WELL-PROTECTED REFINERIES AND STORAGE SITES, AT LEAST ONE PLATOON OF MEN (58) MUST BE MOVED, PRESERVING UNIT INTEGRITY, AGAINST THESE TARGETS. THE ADDITIONAL FIVE HELICOPTERS COMBINED WITH THE TWO ON ORDER WILL FACILITATE THESE OPERATIONS. AS THE TARGETS ARE OFTEN IN REMOTE LOCATIONS OR IN AREAS WHERE THERE IS LIMITED ACCESS, HELICOPTER CAPABILITY IS ESSENTIAL. IT IS ALSO A KEY TO REDUCTION OF TIME BETWEEN RECEIPT OF HARD INTELLIGENCE AND REACTION. UH-1H HELICOPTERS CAN AIRLIFT EIGHT FULLY EQUIPPED PERSONNEL, THUS SEVEN HELICOPTERS MUST BE AVAILABLE TO MOVE A BPP LINE PLATOON. REQUIREMENTS FOR HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE (DOWN TIME) AND ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF THE SEVEN COMMITTED WILL BE MET BY ASSIGNING OTHER TPAD EQUIPMENT.

3. MISSION REQUESTS WASHINGTON APPROVAL TO UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE THAI TO PROVIDE FIVE BELL MODEL 205A-2 HELICOPTERS TO THE TNPD ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS:

A. THE RTG CONTRIBUTION WOULD CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING:

(1) THE RTG INTELLIGENCE GATHERING EFFORT AND SURVEILLANCE ON NARCOTICS MOVEMENTS WILL BE ELEVATED TO LEVELS COMMENSURATE WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

ENHANCED CAPABILITY OF THE BPP FOR INTERDICTION.

(2) AT LEAST TWO LIGHT OBSERVATION RECONNAISSANCE HELICOPTERS WILL BE STATIONED FULL TIME IN CHIANG MAI FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND RECONNAISSANCE.

(3) ON BPP PLATOON (58 MEN) WILL BE ASSIGNED FULL TIME TO ANTI-NARCOTICS WORK.

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(4) SEVEN THAI POLICE AVIATION DIVISION HELICOPTERS WILL BE STA-
TIONED FULL TIME IN CHIANG MAI. OPTIMALLY, THIS WOULD OCCUR BY
ASSIGNING CURRENT TNPD AIR ASSETS UPON SIGNATURE OF THE PROJECT
AGREEMENT. (WE WILL TRY TO GET THE RTG/TNPD TO GO AS FAR AS POS-
SIBLE IN MEETING THIS GOAL IN ORDER TO CUT THE LEAD TIME ON INCREASED
NARCOTICS OPS.) IN ANY EVENT, THERE WOULD BE SEVEN ASSIGNED FULL
TIME ON DELIVERY OF ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS PROPOSED THIS MESSAGE.
(QUERY: CAN THESE BE MADE AVAILABLE NOW, I.E., AT TIME OF DELIVERY
OF TWO ON ORDER WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL BE EX-FACTORY IN LATE
NOVEMBER? IN ANY EVENT, PLEASE ADVISE AS TO DELIVERY SCHEDULE.)
THE HELICOPTERS WILL BE CHIEFLY AND PRIMARILY FOR USE IN SUPPRESSION
OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES. AS OCCASION ARISES, WE WOULD
EXPECT TNPD/BPP TO EXPAND ITS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, PRINCIPALLY
RURAL HEALTH AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS, IN SELECTED AREAS WHERE IMPORTANT
OPPORTUNITIES ARE PRESENT TO BOLSTER THE FLOW OF INFORMATION FROM
VILLAGERS.

B. FYI: WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO STRUCTURE NEGOTIATIONS SO THAT RTG
"ADVISES" US OF ITS INTENT TO MOUNT INCREASED NARCOTICS ACTIVITY
(SEE BKK 16911), POINTS OUT WHAT IT CAN AND WILL DO WITH PRESENT
RESOURCES, REFERS TO EARLER, REPEATED U.S. EXHORTATIONS FOR ACTION,
AND ASKS U.S. FOR HELICOPTERS TO MEET ACKNOWLEDGED RTG PRIORITY
PROGRAM. END FYI

4. REQUEST WASHINGTON APPROVAL PROCEED NEGOTIATIONS.
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